

Message Text

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ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20

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R 260834Z AUG 74

FM AMEMBASSY SEOUL

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5563

INFO AMEMBASSY TOKYO

CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SEOUL 5591

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS KS

SUBJECT: REACTION TO LIFTING OF EMERGENCY MEASURES NOS. 1
AND 4

1. SEPTTEL CONTAINS REPORT ON EDITORIAL REACTION TO LIFTING OF EMERGENCY MEASURES NOS. 1 AND 4. IN PRIVATE DISCUSSIONS WITH EMBOFFS KOREAN POLITICAL, RELIGIOUS AND ACADEMIC CONTACTS HAVE WELCOMED PRESIDENT PARK'S ACTION. OUR CONTACTS ALSO EXPRESSED HOPE THAT LIFTING OF EMERGENCY MEASURES MAY MARK BEGINNING OF NEW MODERATION ON PART OF GOVERNMENT IN DEALING WITH ITS CRITICS AND POLITICAL OPPONENTS. SURPRISE ELECTION OF KIM YONG SAM AS NDP PRESIDENT HAS ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO GENERAL VIEW THAT POLITICAL SCENE IS ENTERING ON NEW PHASE.

2. NCCC/K SEC GEN KIM KWAN-SUK TOLD EMBOFFS HE WAS HEARTENED BY LIFTING OF EMERGENCY MEASURES AND HAS SOME HOPE THAT IT MAY LEAD TO IMPROVEMENT CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS. KIM SAID ON AUG 23 HE HAD PUBLICLY WELCOMED LIFTING OF EMERGENCY MEASURES WHILE CALLING FOR RELEASE OF STUDENTS AND OTHERS CONVICTED UNDER THESE MEASURES. KIM SAID HE WAS VISITED BY
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MCUI CULTURAL BUREAU DIRECTOR AUG 24 TO REQUEST THAT

HE AND OTHER CHURCHMEN PUBLICIZE LIFTING OF EMERGENCY MEASURES AMONG FOREIGN CHURCH GROUPS. MCUI OFFICIAL ALSO ASKED KIM NOT TO PUBLICLY DEMAND RELEASE OF THOSE TRIED UNDER EMERGENCY MEASURES. ACCORDING TO MCUI OFFICIAL, RELEASE OF STUDENTS IS UNDER CONSIDERATION BY GOVERNMENT BUT HE TOLD KIM THERE IS CONCERN PRESIDENT PARK MIGHT REFUSE TO GRANT CLEMENCY IF HE FELT HE WAS BEING PRESSURED BY HIS CRITICS.

3. CATHOLIC SOURCE ALSO INDICATED GENERAL READINESS IN CHURCH CIRCLES TO ACCEPT PRESIDENT PARK'S GESTURE AT FACE VALUE, AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT.

4. AT SAME TIME, THERE DOES EXIST AMONG EMBASSY CONTACTS UNDERLYING CONCERN THAT LIFTING OF EMERGENCY MEASURES MIGHT ONLY BE TACTICAL MOVE SOME ACADEMIC SOURCES MAINTAIN THAT THERE WILL BE STUDENT ANTI-GOVT ACTIVITY WHEN SCHOOL RESUMES, IF ONLY OVER RELEASE OF STUDENTS. THEY SEE APPOINTMENT OF HOME MINISTER PARK KYT G-WON

AND PLACEMENT OF MILITARY OFFICERS IN KEY POLICE AND SECURITY POSITIONS AS INDICATION THAT PRESIDENT PARK REMAINS AS READY AS EVER TO DEAL RUTHLESSLY WITH HIS CRITICS AND OPPONENTS.

5. PRESS SOURCES TELL US THAT GOVERNMENT DIRECTION AND MANIPULATION OF MEDIA REMAINS AS BEFORE WITH A ROUGH DIVISION OF LABOR BETWEEN MCUI AND KCIA. AT SAME TIME, THESE SOURCES ALSO EXPRESS AT LEAST CAUTIOUS HOPE THAT POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT MAY IMPROVE.

6. COMMENT: AS REPORTED ABOVE, LIFTING OF EMERGENCY MEASURES HAS BEEN FAVORABLY RECEIVED BY ALL ELEMENTS OF THE KOREAN POLITICAL SPECTRUM INCLUDING THE CHRISTIANS. NEXT QUESTION GOVERNMENT MUST FACE IS DISPOSITION OF THOSE SENTENCED UNDER EMERGENCY MEASURES. WE HAVE NO WORD FROM OFFICIAL QUARTERS ON QUESTION OF CLEMENCY. HOWEVER, THERE WILL INEVITABLY BE STUDENT/CHRISTIAN PRESSURES, PROBABLY SUPPORTED BY THE NEW NDP LEADERSHIP, FOR RELEASE OF STUDENTS IN POST EMERGENCY MEASURES PERIOD
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IF GOVERNMENT ITSELF DOES NOT MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION.
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